

July 14, 2003

## **Public Notice for 401 Certification**

### **Shorttail Gulch Trail Project Sonoma County**

On June 27, 2003 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Michelle Julene, on behalf of the Sonoma County Regional Parks (County), requesting approval for disturbances to waters of the state and other water quality impacts associated with the development of the proposed project.

The Shorttail Gulch Trail Project is located in Bodega Bay. In October of 1973 a pedestrian easement was dedicated to the County at the time of the Bodega Harbour Subdivision development, for the purpose of constructing a trail. The trail is proposed to support non-motorized, single-use public access to the coast. The trailhead would begin at the East side of Osprey Drive, approximately 150 feet North of Owl Court, and would eventually end on Shorttail Gulch Beach. As part of the Project, the County proposes to stabilize a head-cut in an unnamed tributary to Shorttail Gulch, construct a retaining wall along a portion of the Gulch, and construct steps down to the beach.

The County proposes to build a bridge that will span an unnamed tributary to Shorttail Gulch. However, the easement requires that the bridge be built in an area where the tributary is subject to head-cutting. Above the easement, the tributary flows in a stable, narrow, shallow channel. However, farther down the banks have collapsed and the channel has become much deeper; there is now an area where the narrow, shallow channel portion spills out in a three foot waterfall into the area of bank collapse. The County has concerns that the channel will continue to head-cut until the erosion reaches the area of stable channel where the bridge will be located. To prevent this, the County proposes to install a two-step check dam. As proposed, the check dam will be built of two wood walls placed two feet apart and buried three feet into the channel. The finished walls would be approximately five feet in both width and height. The County proposes to place six inches of rock in the spaces between the two walls and at the foot of the check dam. Re-compacted local material will be used to fill the upstream space behind the check dam (to reach a height equal with the stable channel bottom. As proposed, this portion of the project will require excavating ten cubic feet of material, placing thirty cubic feet of dirt fill, and fifteen cubic feet of rock.

The County also proposes to build a retaining wall along a twenty-five foot section of Shorttail Gulch. The proposed wall will be between three and four feet in depth from the top-of-bank, and will include a safety railing for people walking the trail. The materials proposed for the construction include redwood posts on top of six inches of drain rock. Non-woven fabric will be placed between the retaining wall and the bank of the Gulch.

The final portion of the project that is part of the Water Quality Certification process are the cables steps leading down to the beach. The County proposes to build these steps down into the bottom of the Gulch mouth (where Shorttail Gulch flows into the ocean). The steps will extend ten feet from the top-of-bank to the toe of the slope. Each step will be approximately eighteen inches wide, will be stabilized with steel rebar buried thirty-six inches deep, and will be back-filled with compacted gravel. Approximately five cubic feet of native material will be excavated and approximately ten cubic feet of timber and compacted gravel will be filled into the slope to complete this portion of the Project.

Mitigation proposed for the project is limited to erosion control measures because the pedestrian easement is not large enough to allow planting (or other such mitigation). All disturbed areas will be hydroseeded, and other potential measures include staking a jute mesh mat over a straw layer (in disturbed areas) and placing straw bales at all drain inlets.

According to the applicant, the Project qualifies for a United States Army Corps of Engineers non-notify Nationwide Permit #13, and the Project does not need a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. A Negative Declaration was adopted by Sonoma County on May 14, 2002.

At this time the Regional Water Board is in the process of reviewing the proposed project regarding the issuance of the 401 Certification Permit. In addition, the Regional Water Board will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Lauren Hocker by email at [hockl@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov](mailto:hockl@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov), or send comments to the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.